

MAINE FIRE PROTECTION SERVICES COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

MAY 2, 2005

(approved as amended 6/6/2005)

Chair Jeffrey Cammack called the Maine Fire Protection Services Commission to order at 1:00 p.m. in Room 438 of the State House, Augusta. Members present were Michael Albert, Jack Berry, Senator Bruce Bryant, Representative Richard Brown, Chief Jeffrey Cammack, Chief John Dean, Representative Robert Duplessie, Robert Gardner (for Art Cleaves), Geoffrey Maker, Senator Richard Nass, Harty Norris, Chief Jethro Pease, Steve Willis and Susan Pinette (staff). Members excused from today's meeting included Representative Patricia Blanchette, Jay Bradshaw, John Cannon, Chief Darrel Fournier, Edward Johnston, Charles Soltan, David Wacker and Bill Williams. Alex McPhedran, Maine State Federation of Fire Fighters and Billye Senacal, Program Coordinator of the Emergency Response Corps., attended as guests of the Fire Commission.

A motion by Jethro Pease, seconded by Harty Norris, to accept the April 4, 2005 meeting minutes as amended. The motion passed unanimously. The minutes will be amended to reflect the Fire Commission's support of the concept of L.D 1021 and to carry the bill over to the next legislative session.

Committee Reports

The Training Facilities Committee reports eight vendors responded to the Request for Information and the updated vendor list was distributed to members. The State's Bureau of General Services (BGS) has agreed to assist the committee. BGS indicated the committee's preliminary work has not met with the state's recommended steps however they will review the committee's work and make suggestions. The committee process will remain on hold until they receive guidance from BGS. Members were informed that BGS might want to meet before the June meeting. Members of the committee to review the proposals are Steve Willis, Dave Wacker, Darrel Fournier, Mike Albert, John Dean and Jay Bradshaw

The Traffic Direction Committee reports LD 1337 received a unanimous "ought to pass as amended" recommendation from the Transportation Committee. The committee expressed their gratitude to all parties, especially law enforcement.

The Truss Construction Committee reports that the rulemaking process continues and a public hearing will be scheduled this summer. Copies of the proposed rules are expected to be available at the next meeting.

The Spring Conference Committee made suggestions to improve and expand the conference. The collaboration with Maine Municipal Association

(MMA) has been mutually beneficial. Several suggestions were made to expand the scope of the conference, possibly more like a trade show. Members suggested making the conference a two day event, offering more vendors and work shops, involving school children, partnering with other organizations and showcasing fire apparatus similar to the Missouri program. MMA has also expressed interest in an expanded role in 2006. Chair Cammack appointed Darrel Fournier, Steve Willis and Jack Berry to serve on the 2006 Spring Conference Committee. Other members will be appointed at the June meeting.

Legislative Updates

L.D.10 “Resolve, To Fund a Study Regarding Health Care for Maine's Firefighters” The Criminal Justice and Public Safety (CJ/PS) committee voted to carry this bill over to the Second Regular Session of the Legislature.

L.D. 1021 “An Act To Implement Task Force Recommendations Relating to Parity and Portability of Benefits for Law Enforcement Officers and Firefighters” The Labor Committee voted to divide the report on this bill. The Fire Commission agreed at the April meeting to support the concept of the bill and to recommend L.D. 1021 be carried over to the Second Regular Session. Members expressed frustration and concern that L.D. 1021 was not being carried over. Members were reminded that bills were in the committee’s possession and that the ultimate decision on a bill’s status belonged to the committee. Fire Commission discussed the advantages and disadvantages of taking a position after the public hearing. Members were reminded of the goodwill they have generated in the legislature over the last two sessions and encouraged to avoid partisan fights. Fire Commission members were reminded of the words of former chair, Senator Bill O’Gara, that “the only success we have...will be together.” Members agreed that it is their responsibility to keep all Fire Commission members informed as much as possible.

L.D. 1139 “An Act To Identify the Benefits and Costs of Adjustments to Building Codes” This bill was referred to the Business, Research and Economic Development (BRED) committee and requires the State Fire Marshal’s Office (SFMO) to determine costs and benefits every time a new code is adopted. The SFMO is opposed to the bill because it slows down the process and is confusing. The public hearing is scheduled for May 4th.

L.D. 1337 An Act To Enhance the Safety of Fire and Emergency Medical Service Personnel” The Transportation Committee unanimously voted “ought to pass as amended by committee amendment” on this bill. The hard work and initiation of the Fire Commission was recognized.

L.D. 1405 "An Act To Prepare Maine for Public Health Emergencies" Fire Commission members reviewed this bill that was referred

to the Judiciary Committee for possible effect on Maine's fire service. Staff will contact Dr. Dora Mills, Maine Bureau of Health, for her opinion.

L.D. 1414 “An Act To Authorize Municipalities To Create Municipal Fire Districts” This bill was referred to the State and Local Government Committee. This bill would allow a municipality or municipalities to create fire service districts with the power to tax for fire services. Opposition to the bill comes from the State of Maine and the committee is looking at possibly exempting the state and its agencies. A work session has been scheduled for May 4th.

L.D. 1508 “An Act To Regulate Fire Alarm Contractors” Initially this bill was referred to the Business, Research and Economic Development (BRED) Committee but has since been referred to the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee. This bill is similar to a bill submitted in the 121st Legislature. In this second attempt, supporters of the bill worked to get the industry involved. The bill mirrors the sprinkler industry's regulations. The CJ/PS committee will hold a work session on L.D. 1508 on May 18th and expect to ask to carry the bill over to the Second Regular Session.

A motion by John Dean, seconded by Jack Berry, to endorse and support L.D. 1508 “An Act To Regulate Fire Alarm Contractors” and to send a letter of support to the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee. The motion passed unanimously.

L.D. 1550 “An Act To Establish the Arsonist Registration Act” The bill establishes an arsonist registry similar to Maine's sex offender registry. Individuals would be on the registry for ten years and the State Bureau of Identification would maintain the list. CJ/PS committee is holding a work session on May 6th.

L.D. 1570 “An Act To Require Random Drug Testing for Emergency Vehicle Operators” This bill was referred to the Labor Committee and has been scheduled for public hearing on May 3rd and work session on May 5th. The sponsor is Representative Clough from Scarborough. Fire Commission members have suggested that Rep. Clough be invited to the June 6th fire caucus meeting to discuss his bill.

Old Business

The line of duty checklist packet will be available at the June meeting. Fire Commission members received two drafts of the letter that will be included with the recruitment and retention survey. A secondary survey from Americorps will also be included in the mailing to the Maine Fire Chiefs. Fire

Commission members offered suggestions to simplify the questionnaire but to ask enough information to get good data.

A motion by Jethro Pease, seconded by Richard Nass, to send the second draft letter and to request 2004 data only. The letter will also indicate that 2005 data will be requested later. The motion passed unanimously.

A motion by Mike Albert, seconded by Richard Nass, to include on the new identification badges the following information: the members' name, no titles; Maine Fire Protection Services Commission; and the state seal. The motion passed unanimously.

New Business

Fire Commission members discussed amending the bylaws and whether designees should be allowed if a member could not attend a meeting. The statute allows designees for the Maine Emergency Medical Services and Maine Emergency Management Agency representatives. Members discussed the pros and cons of allowing designees. Members also suggested amending the bylaws to set a lower quorum number.

Members discussed the problem of “dead spots” with transmission towers and its effects on the communication needs of the fire service. Dick Thompson, Maine’s Information Officer, is looking into this issue and may use Maine as a pilot project. The goal of the pilot project would be to allow the smallest and poorest departments to “piggyback” on the state’s communication system.

With no further business to come before the Maine Fire Protection Services Commission, Chief Jeffrey Cammack adjourned the meeting at 3:05pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan M. Pinette

Meeting Schedule

Monday, June 6 th	State House	1:00pm
Monday, July 11 th	Public Safety Building	1:00pm
Monday, September 12 th	Public Safety Building	1:00pm

